

The Invasion of Italy

85

ia. Pompeianus was slain; Verona opened her gates, and so many prisoners fell into the hands of the conqueror that Constantine made his armourers forge chains and manacles from the iron of the captives' swords. In accordance with his usual policy, he conciliated the favour of those whom he had defeated by sparing the city from pillage, and showed an equal clemency to Aquileia and the other cities of Venetia, all of which speedily submitted on the capitulation of Verona.

With the entire north of Italy thus wrested from Maxentius, Constantine could turn his face towards Rome. He encountered no opposition on the march. Maxentius did not even contest the passage of the Apennines; the Umbrian passes were left open; and the historians are to be trusted—and they speak with unanimity on the point—the Italian Emperor simply waited for his doom to come upon him, as Nero had done, and made no really serious effort to defend his throne. This slave in the purple (*purpuratus*), as the author of the Ninth Panegyric calls him, cowered trembling in his palace, paralysed with fear because he had been deserted by the Divine Intelligence and the Eternal Majesty of Rome, which had transferred themselves from the tyrant to the side of his rival. We are told, indeed, that a few days before the appearance of Constantine, Maxentius quitted the palace with his wife and son and took up his abode in a private house, not being able to endure the terrible dreams that came to him by night and the spectres of the victims which haunted his crime-stained halls. Constantine moved swiftly